

American Water Contract Services Group Recommends Large Building Operators and Schools Flush Pipes Regularly to Maintain Water Quality

As the contracted operator of the North Brunswick Water Treatment Plant, American Water Contract Services Group (CSG) remains committed to keeping customers informed as it continues to deliver, clean, safe and reliable water service during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

As many offices, schools and other large buildings are largely unoccupied during the state's stay-at-home order, CSG encourages large building owners and operators to adopt a proactive approach that includes proper flushing procedures, and proper maintenance of building plumbing and heating/cooling systems. Proper flushing of plumbing before reoccupying these buildings is essential to maintain water quality in the internal plumbing system and should be performed biweekly while the building is closed, if possible, and again the days immediately prior to opening.

The general purpose of flushing is to bring fresh water into all sections of the building. This will require running water through all fixtures long enough to replace old stagnant water. The time needed to complete this will be location-specific and may range from a few minutes for smaller buildings to more than 30 minutes for larger or more complex plumbing systems.

Recommended Proper Maintenance Protocols to Help Maintain Water Quality in Unoccupied Buildings

Consistent with EPA and industry guidance, CSG recommends the flushing of pipes every two weeks to maintain water quality, as follows:

- Toilets: Flush at least twice
- Faucets: Run both hot and cold water at full flow for at least 2 minutes. Longer times may be needed depending on location.
- Showers: Run both hot and cold water at full flow for at least 2 minutes. Longer times may be needed depending on location.
- Other Appliances/Apparatus: Flush other appliances and apparatus thoroughly, at full flow, bringing fresh water into the system. If you have an appliance such as a refrigerator or ice maker that has a filter, follow the manufacturer's instructions to replace water filters after completion of flushing.

For additional information on flushing you can go to American Water's [fact sheet](#); the Environmental Protection Agency's [Flushing Best Practices](#); the Center for Disease Control [web page](#); or the [American Water Works Association](#).